

OPENING STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE RANDY NEUGEBAUER  
MAY 3, 2004

First, I'd like to thank Mr. Moore for hosting this field hearing in his home state Kansas; and I'd like to thank our panel of distinguished witnesses, Mr. Charles Schable, Mr. Samuel Turner, Mr. Richard Morrissey, Ms. Kay Kent, Mr. Brad Mason, and Dr. Ronald J. Kendall for appearing before the Science Committee today. I would also like to recognize Dr. Kendall as he is here from my hometown, Lubbock Texas. Dr. Kendall is the Director of the Institute for Environmental and Human Health, or what we like to call TIEHH, at Texas Tech University. He is an expert in environmental toxicology. TIEHH leads the Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr. National Program for Countermeasures to Biological and Chemical Threats, which includes work on detection, biological mechanisms, physical and medical countermeasures, modeling, and education, training, and outreach. Thank you Dr. Kendall. And thank you all for taking time out of your busy day to be here to talk about this important issue.

At this time in American history, our national security has become the most important issue facing our nation. The events of September 11th along with the anthrax attacks in 2001 have increased the Nation's concern about bioterrorism and our ability to respond to attacks. Public health professionals play a vital role in preparing and coordinating emergency personnel for such events. They are also responsible for detecting, investigating and identifying disease outbreaks and simultaneously communicate effective information with first responders, the media, and the public. The capacity to fulfill these responsibilities depends on the strength of the infrastructure that supports public health services.

Today we are going to receive testimony on state and local preparedness for a bioterrorist attack and discuss the role of the Federal Government in supporting local efforts to prepare for, detect, and respond to an attack. We will also talk about developing and deploying the necessary tools and systems for detecting and responding to a bioterrorist attack.

Again, thank you all for being here. I look forward to hearing your testimony. Mr. Moore.